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City speeds up NEI repairs

The city projects that it will be able to reduce the amount of time to make repairs to the Northeast Interceptor (NEI) pipeline by at least two months. The timeline is critical because of the ongoing moratorium on sewer extensions and the limit on new building permits.

Kimley-Horn and Associates is spearheading the repair effort for the city and has provided a new timeline for repairs that the state says must be completed before the moratorium can be lifted:

Repairs to NEI on Greenville Loop Road – project to repair portions of the NEI that run along side Greenville Loop Road. This project has already been designed and bid out. Construction is expected to begin by July, with incentives included in the contract for early completion. Repairs are expected to be done by the end of September.

Pump Station improvements – improvements to the pumps used at the Hewlett's Creek and Bradley Creek pump stations that would increase capacity and reliability. Design work is already completed, and the city is in process of getting fast-tracked permits from the state so work can proceed. Project time will be further reduced by using vendors already under contract to the city instead of going through another bid process. The city is also considering faster ways to purchase the pumps.

Pipe relocation – would replace 7,000 feet of the NEI that currently runs through Hewlett's Creek. This project has already been expedited by several months because a route has been designed that will require the city to purchase only one small section of private property for the project, called an easement. Acquiring easements can often take months of negotiation with property owners before a purchase price can be agreed upon.

Bids for the project will go out next week, two months ahead of schedule. Construction time will be reduced by another two months by requiring the contractor to use two crews instead of one. Both of these items are not expected to increase the project cost. Current completion date is now expected by January, 2008 instead of April, 2008, as originally scheduled.

Another 45-60 days could be shaved off the schedule of both the pump station and pipe relocation projects if the city were not required to go through the normal public bid process. The local legislative delegation has been asked to consider a bill that would allow the city to move forward with the NEI repairs without a public bid process. It would apply only to NEI projects.